

Please remember to get access permission to any site you are visiting. As there is a possibility of confusion with other species, take particular care over confirming the identification. If possible, take a photograph or retain the specimen.

We would also like to hear from you if you have had experience of this species abroad. In particular, we would like to know about its habitat preferences.

The results (including the important negative results) should be sent to Adrian Spalding at Tremayne Farm Cottage, Tremayne, Prazee-an-Beeble, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 9PH (phone no. 01209 831517). If this survey proves successful and gives rise to interesting data, further species (particularly BAP species) may be targeted for similar surveys.

We would like to thank both JNCC and Paul Waring for permission to use information from the forthcoming *Atlas* and to publish the provisional distribution map.

Further information about this and other BAP priority species of moth, and how you can help, can be obtained by contacting Mark Parsons or David Green at Butterfly Conservation, UK Conservation Office, PO Box 444, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5YA.

SHORT COMMUNICATION

A breeding record of *Senometopia excisa* (Fallén) (Diptera: Tachinidae)—The tachinid *Senometopia excisa* is a rare species in Britain with only a doubtful breeding record. Belshaw (1993, *Handbook for Identification of British Insects*, Vol. 10, Part 4a(i)) gives the known records as: Lynton, N. Devon, 29.vii.1895; and a further example as “?Painswick in Gloucs”. It would appear that it is the identification of the specimen that is in doubt rather than the locality, and that this individual was reared from the geometrid moth *Abraxas sylvata* (Scop.), a host species utilized by the tachinid’s congener *S. intermedia* (Herting) (Belshaw, loc. cit.).

On 11. ix.1998 I beat from wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*) a few larvae of *sylvata* in a wood near to Orpington, W. Kent, in a vain attempt to breed them. As on previous occasions the larvae died before pupation but one larva produced a single tachinid larva which gave rise to *S. excisa* later that autumn.

As far as I can determine, this Kent colony of *sylvata* is the only breeding colony in the whole of Kent, Surrey, Sussex and the London area, although isolated individuals of the moth turn up widely from time to time, and the moth was commoner in the past. Belshaw (loc. cit.) says that the fly parasitizes a range of lepidopterous larvae in Europe, although of what families and on what foodplants he gives no clues. The third species of *Senometopia*, *S. pollinosa* (Mensil), is a parasite of various geometer larvae feeding on pine, and the females are attracted to the scent of this plant; it is possible therefore that *excisa* may use other larvae feeding on elm, although it is fair to say that there are no other species restricted to elm at this time of year in the south-east of England. Lepidopterists rearing *sylvata* would perform a valuable service by retaining any parasites reared from its larvae so that we may better understand the biology of this rare species. I thank Peter Chandler for confirming the identity of the tachinid.—GRAHAM A. COLLINS, 15 Hurst Way, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 7AP.